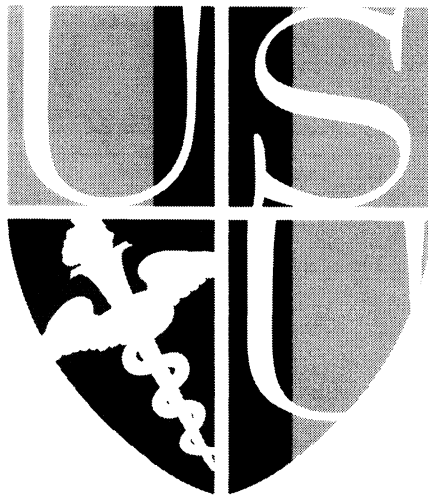


**USUHS  
INSTRUCTION  
1105**





# UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES



## SUBJECT: USUHS School of Medicine (SOM) Grades, Grading Policies, and Procedures

### Instruction 1105

DEC 19 2005

(REG)

#### ABSTRACT

This Instruction assigns responsibilities and prescribes the procedures to be followed in the rendering and submission of grades for medical students of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS).

**A. Reissuance and Purpose.** This Instruction reissues USUHS Instruction 1105<sup>a</sup> to establish policies and procedures for awarding and transmittal of grades, and the grading system of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (SOM), USUHS.

**B. References.** *See Enclosure 1.*

**C. Background.** Medical students are awarded final grades at the conclusion of each medical school curriculum course. Final grades are transmitted to and maintained in the office of the Assistant Dean, Registrar (REG), USUHS.

**D. Applicability.** This Instruction applies to medical students of the SOM, REG, and to those individuals responsible for awarding grades to those students.

**E. Policy.** It is USUHS policy to:

1. Monitor medical student academic progress through receipt and analysis of final course grades and national examinations.

2. Notify medical students of their academic progress.

3. Retain academic grades, national examination results, and academic records of all matriculated medical students.

4. Provide official transcripts and reports of academic progress of medical students to authorized recipients.

**F. Responsibilities.**

1. The Department Chair/Course Director shall:

- a. Award final grades for academic performance.

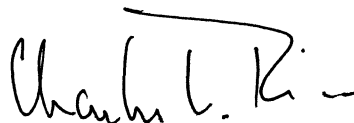
- b. Report final course/clerkship grades to the Assistant Dean, REG.

- c. Make examination grades available to medical students.

- d. Be responsible for reviewing a student's written appeal of a previous grade. (*See Enclosure 3, page 6, paragraph G.*)

2. The Assistant Dean, Registrar shall:
  - a. Report official final course/ clerkship grades to the medical students.
  - b. Maintain records (transcripts) of all course grades.

**G. Procedures.** *See Enclosure 3.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles L. Rice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Charles L. Rice, M.D.  
President

Enclosures:

1. References
2. Remedial GPA Computations
3. Procedures

**REFERENCES**

- (a) USUHS Instruction 1105, "Grades and Grading Policies and Procedures," dated December 23, 1997 (hereby cancelled)
- (b) USUHS Instruction 1201, "Medical Student Promotions Committee," dated December 16, 1996
- (c) USUHS Instruction 6025, "USUHS Student Absence from Academic Duties Due to Temporary Disability," dated June 21, 1996

### COMPUTATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

The GPA is computed by knowing: 1) the course grade; 2) course credits; and, 3) the course grade equivalent points ("A" = 4; "B" = 3; "C" = 2; "D" = 1; "F" = 0) in order to arrive at course quality points. The equation

$$\text{quality points} = \text{course grade equivalent points} \times \text{course credits}$$

is used. Pass/Fail (P/F) courses do not contribute to the calculation of the GPA. The following is an example of computing the GPA for the freshman year.

<u>Course(s)</u>	<u>Grade</u>		<u>Grade Equivalent Points</u>		<u>Course Credits</u>		<u>Quality Points</u>
Anatomy I/IV	C	=	2	x	5	=	10
Anatomy II	B	=	3	x	6	=	18
Anatomy III	B	=	3	x	6	=	18
Biochemistry	F	=	0	x	9	=	0
Diag Parasit & Med Zoo	A	=	4	x	2	=	8
Epidemiology/Biometrics	B	=	3	x	3	=	9
Human Context	B	=	3	x	3	=	9
Intro to Clin Med I	P	=	-	x	(3)	=	--
Medical Physiology	C	=	2	x	9	=	18
Medical Psychology	B	=	3	x	2	=	6
Mil Med Field Studies	P	=	-	x	(5)	=	--
Military Studies I	B	=	3	x	<u>6</u>	=	<u>18</u>
					51		114

The total number of quality points is then divided by the total of course credits (excluding any P/F courses). Thus  $114 \div 51 = 2.23$  GPA.

## Enclosure 2

Recomputation of the GPA after remediation of the F in Biochemistry with a remedial grade of B is illustrated below. The F(B) grades are averaged to give grade equivalent points of 1.5 for Biochemistry.

<u>Course(s)</u>	<u>Grade</u>		<u>Grade Equivalent Points</u>		<u>Course Credits</u>		<u>Quality Points</u>
Anatomy I/IV	C	=	2	x	5	=	10
Anatomy II	B	=	3	x	6	=	18
Anatomy III	B	=	3	x	6	=	18
Biochemistry	F(B)	=	1.5	x	9	=	13.5
Diag Parasit & Med Zoo	A	=	4	x	2	=	8
Epidemiology/Biometrics	B	=	3	x	3	=	9
Human Context	B	=	3	x	3	=	9
Intro to Clin Med I	P	=	-	x	(3)	=	--
Medical Physiology	C	=	2	x	9	=	18
Medical Psychology	B	=	3	x	2	=	6
Mil Med Field Studies	P	=	-	x	(5)	=	--
Military Studies I	B	=	3	x	<u>6</u>	=	<u>18</u>
					51		127.5

The total number of quality points is then divided by the total of course credits (excluding any P/F courses). Thus,  $127.5 \div 51 = 2.50$ .

## PROCEDURES

### A. Grades.

1. Grading of academic performance includes evaluation of both cognitive and non-cognitive performance, as defined in USUHS Instruction 1201<sup>b</sup>, Section E.3.a.-b. For each required course, written grading criteria are prepared by the responsible academic department, reviewed periodically by the Curriculum Committee, and distributed to medical students at the beginning of the course.

a. Cognitive performance is evaluated in all basic sciences courses. Non-cognitive performance may also be evaluated in basic sciences courses in activities such as laboratories, seminars, or discussion groups. In those activities for which non-cognitive performance constitutes a portion of the grade, this information will be published with other grading criteria.

b. Both cognitive and non-cognitive performance are evaluated in all clinical sciences courses. Failure to demonstrate characteristics such as dependability, punctuality, professional and academic integrity, or ability to get along with patients and other members of the health care team, may lead to a grade of D or F, even with adequate mastery of cognitive factors.

c. The academic content of several basic sciences and clinical sciences courses includes participation in laboratory experiences that may involve the use of laboratory animals. The requirement for medical student attendance is established by the Curriculum Committee with the concurrence of the Dean, School of

Medicine (DEN). Failure to participate in these laboratories will result in sufficient grounds for course failure and review by the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) and potential disenrollment from the SOM. Department Chairs or inter-departmental course directors will specify in writing on the beginning day of each course/clerkship the specific educational sessions at which attendance is mandatory, and the consequences of a medical student's failure to attend mandatory sessions.

d. Attendance in laboratory experiences, field trips, individual or small group assignments and discussions, conferences, seminars, or clerkship assignments is required unless otherwise specified by department chairs.

2. The following grades are used by the SOM:

a. The grade "A" (honors) is reserved for exceptional mastery of the material. It recognizes excellence.

b. The grade "B" is for very good performance.

c. The grade "C" is a satisfactory grade. The medical student has met all course requirements.

d. The grade "D" (low pass) signifies that the faculty has serious reservations about the medical student's performance. In the basic sciences, it may require remediation; in the clinical sciences, a "D" grade must be remediated. (*See Enclosure 3, C.*)

e. The grade "F" is a failing grade and must be remediated.

f. The grade "I" indicates an

incomplete (i.e., the medical student has not completed the course requirements, such as taking the final examination, submitting a course paper, or making up a previously scheduled examination). The grade of "I" is assigned only with the approval of both the chair of the involved department, and the Associate Dean, Student Affairs (OSA). The department chair must make a recommendation in writing to the Associate Dean, OSA, with a copy to the Assistant Dean, REG, as to how and by what date the temporary "I" grade will be converted to a permanent grade. Failure to fulfill the stipulated requirements by the specified date, unless an extension is granted by the involved department chair and approved by the Associate Dean, OSA, will result in conversion of the "I" grade to a grade of "F". The temporary grade of "I" must be changed to a permanent grade prior to graduation. Any medical student with a grade of Incomplete ("I") in any course at the end of the MS-III year will not be permitted to proceed to the MS-IV year without a review and recommendation from the Student Promotions Committee and approved by the DEN. Per USUHS Instruction 6025<sup>c</sup>, a grade of "I" may be given with the interruption of academic duties due to temporary disability.

(1) Incomplete requirements in the basic sciences may be made up as deemed appropriate by the respective USUHS department chair/course director. This may include tutorials, direct readings, summer courses, repetition of the course, or extension of the normal four-year curriculum, which will require additional service obligation.

(2) Incomplete requirements in

the clinical sciences will require additional clinical work as deemed appropriate by the respective USUHS department chair/course director. It may require extension of the normal four-year curriculum, which will require consultation with the OSA and additional service obligation.

g. The grade "P" is a passing grade. It is used only in courses/clerkships that are designated Pass/Fail, and does not contribute to the calculation of the grade point average (GPA).

h. The grade "U" signifies unsatisfactory performance. It is a failing grade and must be remediated. It is used only in courses/clerkships that are designated Pass/Fail, and does not contribute to the calculation of the GPA.

i. The grade "AU" is for audit. The medical student may audit a course with the approval of the department chair and the Associate Dean, OSA (basic sciences courses) or the Assistant Dean, Clinical Sciences (clinical sciences courses). "AU" will be indicated on the transcript.

j. The grade "W" is for withdrawal. It is used when a medical student withdraws before completion of a course, and the retaking of the entire course is anticipated. The grade "W" will be assigned only with approval of the chair of the involved department and the Associate Dean, OSA (for the basic sciences courses) or the Assistant Dean, Clinical Sciences (for the clinical sciences courses). The grade "W" will be removed from the transcript after the course has been repeated. Per USUHS Instruction 6025<sup>c</sup>, a grade of "W" may be given with the interruption of academic duties due to temporary disability.

k. The grade "EX" is for exempt.



### Enclosure 3

A department chair may exempt a student from fulfilling a course requirement based upon proven expertise, "testing out," or academic degree(s) (i.e., masters and/or doctoral).

1. The grade "INV" indicates invalidated. The decision to invalidate a previously awarded grade or to assign an "INV" grade in lieu of an alternative grade generally would be based on a documented violation of academic integrity on the part of the medical student. "INV" may also be used when other non-cognitive deficiencies of the medical student are documented and "INV" is judged to be the most appropriate grade. Assignment of the "INV" grade is an administrative action taken by the DEN based on the recommendations of the SPC. A grade of "INV" for documented violation of academic integrity on the part of the medical student, as recommended by the Student Promotions Committee and subsequently approved by the DEN (*see USUHS Instruction 1201, Enclosure 3, paragraph E.2.e.*), will be entered on the academic transcript and remain permanently thereon. When the grade "INV" is assigned, the medical student will be required to retake the course/clerkship or complete other remedial work stipulated by the DEN to establish a remedial grade for the course/clerkship.

#### B. Exemptions.

1. A statement explaining that medical students may be exempted from courses under appropriate circumstances will be included in the SOM Bulletin and in the Student Handbook.

2. For each basic sciences course, the

responsible academic department will have written policies concerning the requirements for exemption.

3. A medical student who is exempted from a basic sciences course must present a proposal to the Associate Dean, OSA, for an alternative scholarly activity in the sciences, arts, or humanities to be pursued in lieu of the exempted course. The Associate Dean, OSA, has broad authority to approve or disapprove such a proposal and to establish procedures for evaluation of academic performance of a medical student who is pursuing an alternative scholarly activity. Except in the case of enrollment of a USUHS medical student in a USUHS 360 graduate course for credit, no grade for the alternative scholarly activity is recorded on the medical student's transcript. The Associate Dean, OSA, will notify the DEN concerning each exemption from a basic sciences course and the approved alternate scholarly activity.

4. An outstanding third-year medical student who is interested in alternative scholarly activities in the fourth year may submit to the Assistant Dean, Clinical Sciences a proposal for laboratory research or an independent study to be performed under the supervision of a USUHS faculty member. For such a medical student, some or all selective requirements may be waived; however, the medical student must complete Military Contingency Medicine, Military Emergency Medicine, Neurology, and the sub-internship requirements. The Associate Dean, OSA, with the concurrence of the respective clinical department chair having responsibility for the subject areas of the

selectives to be waived, may approve such a proposal. The Associate Dean, OSA, will notify the DEN concerning each alternative program of approved scholarly activities.

5. By the end of the third year, medical students who have demonstrated a sufficiently high level of competence in specific clinical disciplines may be exempted from some selective requirements in the fourth-year and may substitute elective courses/clerkships for the exempted selective requirements. The following guidelines govern such exemptions:

a. A medical student in good academic standing (not on academic probation) who achieves a grade of not less than "B" in each of the Medicine, Pediatrics, and Family Medicine third-year clerkships, may have one month of the fourth-year Medicine selective requirement waived.

b. A medical student in good academic standing (not on academic probation) who achieves a grade of not less than "B" in both the Surgery and Obstetrics/Gynecology third-year clerkships, may have one month of the fourth-year Surgery Selective requirement waived.

c. A medical student in good academic standing (not on academic probation) who achieves a grade of "B" in the Psychiatry third-year clerkship, may have the one-month fourth-year Behavioral Sciences selective waived.

**C. Remediation.**

1. The SPC will recommend to the DEN, in accordance with the appropriate provisions of this Instruction and USUHS Instruction 1201<sup>b</sup>, that a given course(s)/ clerkship(s) be remediated.

2. The grade "D" (low pass) in the basic sciences may require remediation; in the clinical sciences, a "D" must be remediated. The grades "F" and "U" are failing grades and must be remediated.

3. The responsible department defines the format, content, duration, and grading criteria for remediation in writing to the medical student, with copies to the Associate Dean, OSA (basic sciences courses), Assistant Dean, Clinical Sciences (clinical sciences courses), and REG. Grades of "A", "B", "C", "D", or "F" will be assigned for remediation of courses that were originally graded on that scale, and grades of "P" or "U" will be assigned for remediation of Pass/Fail courses.

4. The remedial grade will be designated by an asterisk on the academic transcript, and the original grade will remain on the transcript. After remediation of any course/clerkship that is not designated Pass/Fail, the GPA will be recomputed using the average value of the original grade and the remedial grade. See *Enclosure 2* for an illustration and methodology of computing the GPA before and after a required remediation.

5. The duration of remediation for a third- or fourth-year clerkship will not initially exceed the length of the original clerkship. In some cases, a department may decide that a regularly scheduled fourth-year course can simultaneously serve both as remediation for a third-year clerkship and as a component of the fourth-year curriculum. In such cases, one grade is assigned for the

remedial experience, based on performance criteria established for remediation, and a second grade is assigned for the fourth-year course, according to the established grading criteria for that course. The remedial grade is handled as described in *Enclosure 2* and *Enclosure 3, C.4*. The grade for the fourth-year course is recorded on the transcript and contributes to the GPA in the usual way. The remedial grade and the grade for the fourth-year course are based on separate criteria and may be different. If a department approves the use of a subinternship to remediate an unsatisfactory grade given in a third-year clerkship, the satisfactorily completed subinternship may also be used to satisfy the SOM's fourth-year requirement for a graded subinternship. If a medical student satisfactorily remediates the third-year clerkship but receives a grade of "D" or "F" for the fourth-year subinternship, then remediation of the subinternship is required.

**6. Requirements for Remediation of Fourth-Year Courses.**

a. Subinternship: Remediation is accomplished by a four- or eight-week experience approved by the responsible department.

b. Military Contingency Medicine (MCM): Remediation is accomplished by repeating the rotation during one of the regularly scheduled blocks or by an alternative clinical experience as approved by the Department of Military and Emergency Medicine (MEM).

c. Military Emergency Medicine (MEM): Remediation is accomplished by a four-week clerkship in emergency medicine as approved by MEM.

d. Neurology: Remediation is accomplished by a four-week clerkship as approved by the Department of Neurology (NEU).

e. Pass/Fail Clerkship: Remediation is accomplished by a four-week clerkship as approved by the responsible department.

f. Courses not specified above are remediated as defined in *Enclosure 3, C.3*.

7. Elective/selective instructional experiences scheduled during the last eight weeks of the fourth-year curriculum may be waived by the DEN. Grades of D, F, or U in any instructional experience must be remediated.

**D. Submission of Grades.**

1. Basic Sciences Courses. Final grades are due one calendar week after the end of the course. Grades are submitted on USUHS Form 123, "Class/Rotation Roster."

As an exception, if the final examination for a course is a National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) subject test, the final grades will be reported within one calendar week after receipt of examination scores from the NBME.

2. Clinical Sciences Courses. Evaluation of a medical student's performance is submitted within six weeks after completion of the rotation. As an exception, if the final examination for a clerkship is an NBME subject test, the final grades will be reported within six weeks after receipt of examination scores from the NBME. Evaluations are submitted on USUHS Form 650, "USU-SOM Student Performance Evaluation," which are available in the REG.

All third-year clerkships, fourth-year subinternships, and courses/clerkships in MCM, MEM, and Neurology are graded "A", "B", "C", "D", or "F". Other fourth-year electives/selectives are graded Pass/Fail.

E. Transmittal of Grades. Grades are forwarded by the department chair/course director to the Assistant Dean, REG, in a sealed envelope, and when feasible, grades should be hand-carried. Medical students may not hand-carry grades. An annotated copy of USUHS Form 123 will be returned from the Assistant Dean, REG, to the department chair/course director upon completion of the posting of grades to the official records.

F. Grade Changes. The department chair/course director is the only person authorized to initiate and report a grade change. Grade changes are forwarded as provided in *Enclosure 3, E.* to the Assistant Dean, REG, on USUHS Form 118, "Change of Grade Report." After the posting of the new grade, distribution of the annotated USUHS Form 118 is made by the Assistant Dean, REG. Grade changes occur rarely and usually result from a medical student appeal to a department chair, an error in recording, or the natural completion of requirements following the grade of "I". In such cases the determination of the chair is final and binding. Grade changes for any other reason require consultation and approval of the DEN. For example, if a temporary grade of "I" is replaced by a final grade, or if a final grade is rendered in the course of normal instruction, that grade is officially recorded and retained on the transcript. In designing

remedial plans for final grades of "D" or "F" a new grade will be entered on the transcript when the remedial experience has been concluded. USUHS Form 118 cannot be used to alter SOM policy about the recording of grades on the transcript. For instance, in the case of medical students remediating deficiencies that resulted in original final grades of "D" or "F", departments cannot issue both a remedial grade and simultaneously purge the original grade using USUHS Form 118 unless exceptional justification exists and has been approved by the DEN.

G. Request for Review of Assigned Grade. A medical student may ask that his/her grade be reviewed by the department chair(s) and/or course director(s) if the medical student feels there is an academic reason for the grade to be changed. The medical student's request will be set forth in writing, and must be submitted within a 14-day period following receipt of the grade by the medical student. The Student Promotions Committee will take no action on a failing grade for which a request for grade change action has been initiated by the medical student within the 14-day time frame. The decision of a department chair or course director, with or without consultation with a department committee, will be final. The department chair or course director will reply to the medical student in writing. A copy of the request and reply will be maintained by the department chair or course director.

H. Request for Transcripts. Requests for transcripts are directed in writing to the Assistant Dean, REG.

### Enclosure 3

1. **Student Copy.** All medical students are entitled to a "student copy" of their transcript, and the copy is so annotated. This copy is for the medical student's personal use, and is not to be misconstrued as an official document.

2. **Official Copy.** Official school transcripts are provided to others upon written request by the medical student, in accordance with the Privacy Act. Such a document is embossed with the USUHS seal and annotated as an official school transcript. Records of such requests are maintained by the Assistant Dean, REG, in accordance with the Privacy Act. Based upon the individual Service's procedures, transcripts may be a part of an officer's official military files.

I. **Grade Reports.** Medical students are given individual grade reports by the Assistant Dean, REG, as each course is completed and the grades are forwarded to the Assistant Dean, REG. A complete end-of-year grade report is forwarded to each medical student at the end of each academic year, and includes a computed GPA.

J. **Access to Medical Students' Records and Correction of Records.** The Privacy Act and implementing regulations apply to students' records. Medical students may:

1. Request access to their record or to any information pertaining to themselves that is retained by the Assistant Dean, REG.

2. Request that persons of their own choosing accompany them; or authorize in writing a designated person(s) to review the record and have a copy made of all or any portion thereof. The Assistant Dean, REG, requires medical students to furnish written statements authorizing discussion of their records in the accompanying person's presence.

3. Request in writing an amendment of records pertaining to themselves. After obtaining the necessary verification and not later than ten working days after the receipt of such request, the Assistant Dean, REG, will acknowledge the request in writing and make any justified correction(s) of any portion of the record. The medical student will be notified by the Assistant Dean, REG, of any refusal to amend the record in accordance with the request and the reason for the refusal.

K. **Academic Review.** The SPC reviews the specific academic performance of each medical student in accordance with USUHS Instruction 1201<sup>b</sup>.